

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS
BEAUMONT DIVISION

NATHAN JOEL NICHOLS	§	
VS.	§	CIVIL ACTION NO. 1:12-CV-382
LAYNE WALKER, ET AL.	§	

ORDER OVERRULING PETITIONER'S OBJECTIONS AND ADOPTING THE MAGISTRATE JUDGE'S REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION

Petitioner Nathan Joel Nichols, a prisoner previously confined at the Jefferson County Correctional Facility, proceeding *pro se*, brought this petition for writ of habeas corpus pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 2241.

The court ordered that this matter be referred to the Honorable Zack Hawthorn, United States Magistrate Judge, for consideration pursuant to applicable laws and orders of this court. The Magistrate Judge has submitted a Report and Recommendation of United States Magistrate Judge. The Magistrate Judge recommends dismissing the petition as moot.

The court has received and considered the Report and Recommendation of United States Magistrate Judge, along with the record and the pleadings. Petitioner filed objections to the Magistrate Judge's Report and Recommendation.

The court has conducted a *de novo* review of the objections in relation to the pleadings and the applicable law. *See* FED. R. CIV. P. 72(b). Petitioner's claim of excessive bail is mooted by his conviction. In his objections, petitioner asserts that he was denied a speedy trial. His recent conviction has opened additional state court avenues for litigating his speedy trial claim, which were not available to him as a pretrial detainee. Petitioner's speedy trial claim is unexhausted because he

has not presented it to the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals on direct appeal or in a state application for habeas relief. Comity dictates that the state courts should be allowed the first opportunity to review the speedy trial claim. After he exhausts state court remedies, petitioner may pursue the claim in federal court.

In this case, the petitioner is not entitled to the issuance of a certificate of appealability. An appeal from a judgment denying federal habeas corpus relief may not proceed unless a judge issues a certificate of appealability. *See* 28 U.S.C. § 2253; FED. R. APP. P. 22(b). The standard for granting a certificate of appealability, like that for granting a certificate of probable cause to appeal under prior law, requires the petitioner to make a substantial showing of the denial of a federal constitutional right. *See Slack v. McDaniel*, 529 U.S. 473, 483-84 (2000); *Elizalde v. Dretke*, 362 F.3d 323, 328 (5th Cir. 2004); *see also Barefoot v. Estelle*, 463 U.S. 880, 893 (1982). In making that substantial showing, the petitioner need not establish that he should prevail on the merits. Rather, he must demonstrate that the issues are subject to debate among jurists of reason, that a court could resolve the issues in a different manner, or that the questions presented are worthy of encouragement to proceed further. *See Slack*, 529 U.S. at 483-84; *Avila v. Quarterman*, 560 F.3d 299, 304 (5th Cir. 2009). If the petition was denied on procedural grounds, the petitioner must show that jurists of reason would find it debatable: (1) whether the petition raises a valid claim of the denial of a constitutional right, and (2) whether the district court was correct in its procedural ruling. *Slack*, 529 U.S. at 484; *Elizalde*, 362 F.3d at 328. Any doubt regarding whether to grant a certificate of appealability is resolved in favor of the petitioner, and the severity of the penalty may be considered in making this determination. *See Miller v. Johnson*, 200 F.3d 274, 280-81 (5th Cir. 2000).

Here, the petitioner has not shown that any of the issues raised by his claims are subject to debate among jurists of reason, or that a procedural ruling was incorrect. In addition, the questions presented are not worthy of encouragement to proceed further. Therefore, the petitioner has failed to make a sufficient showing to merit the issuance of a certificate of appealability.

ORDER

Accordingly, petitioner's objections are **OVERRULED**. The findings of fact and conclusions of law of the Magistrate Judge are correct, and the report of the Magistrate Judge is **ADOPTED**. A final judgment will be entered in this case in accordance with this order. A certificate of appealability will not be issued.

So **ORDERED** and **SIGNED** this **23** day of **June, 2014**.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ron Clark", is written above a horizontal line.

Ron Clark, United States District Judge